

THE Christian Messenger.

NO. 25.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 1820.

VOL. I.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xxiii. 34.

General Epistle for A. D. 1819.

(Concluded from last Number.)

AT this session of the Convention, the solemnities and privileges of Ordination were conferred on two young brethren, and Letters of Christian Fellowship granted another. It is devoutly hoped, their abilities, gifts and graces will be zealously and prudently exerted in the promulgation of the truth as it is in Jesus. The public services at the sanctuary were attended with usual rejoicing, solemnity and decorum. We crowded the gates of Zion with thankful songs, addressed the Throne of grace with devout and contrite hearts, proclaimed the word of life, under a proper sense of the responsibility, and listened, with truly enraptured feelings, to the declaration of the gospel of truth.

The diffusive, impartial and unalterable goodness, and tender mercy of God; the importance of beholding and participating the same, that the blessings of divine confidence might be enjoyed; the harmony of the threatenings and promises in the economy of grace, for the final subjection of all things to Christ; the nature and operations of godly sorrow and repentance, as the appointed medium in the gospel, for the spiritual deliverance and restoration of sinners; the importance of an immediate attention to the requirements of Christianity, under an apprehension of the appointed day, in which God will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead, were the glorious themes which heightened the felicity of an attentive audience at the sanctuary.—The blood-redeemed of the Lord Jesus came from the east, the west, the north, and the south, and sat down together, in heavenly places in Christ,

in the fruition of the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

We must conclude this letter by soliciting the attention of the several Societies in fellowship with this Convention, to some important considerations relating to an History, and a Seminary of science.

The utility of an History of the rise and progress of Universalism, and especially of its present standing, will be duly appreciated by all acquainted with that department of learning. Through the medium of History we become acquainted with the greatest and most interesting events of the world, while enjoying our fire-side. The revolutions of states, nations and empires, both ancient and modern, with all their vast train of corresponding events, pass as it were in review, before the mind's eye. By the same medium you might be conversant with the early Preachers of the doctrine you believe, reap the fruits of their experience and observations, compare the different views in relation to the salvation of all men, enjoy the company and contemplate the prosperity of your sister societies, at your homes, with every thing else, in a positive or relative sense, which renders religious compacts desirable. May this brief and imperfect intimation, inspire a fixed determination in the ministering Brethren and others, to be actively engaged, in furnishing materials for the Committee, appointed to receive and arrange communications for that work.

The Seminary of Science established at *Dudley* (Mass.) in May last, under an act of Incorporation, similar to other institutions of the same nature, demands the support and patronage of the Friends of Literature and truth. This Institution is under the guidance and care of twenty Trustees all members of the General Convention, or Societies in fellowship therewith, and

will undoubtedly be conducted with the utmost regularity and prudence.

It is denominated the *NICHOLS ACADEMY*, as the patronymic name of the noble and munificent *AMASA NICHOLS*, Esq. of said *Dudley*, who has generously donated the Corporation, a large and commodious building for literary purposes, as long as they continue in it a respectable school. Whenever there shall arise a surplus income, it is to be expended in the free education of young men, of indigent circumstances, but moral and pious habits, designing to enter the gospel ministry. We hope the brethren, generally, will make spirited exertions to obtain subscriptions for the support of this Institution, whenever the papers for that purpose are forwarded.

Beseeking all herein addressed to study the Scriptures, obey their precepts, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, we conclude, by imploring upon you, and all men, the smiles and benediction of the King eternal, immortal, and invisible.

Amen and Amen.

By Order:

RUSSELL STREETER.

—O—
FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

I had expressed an opinion in page 65 of the *Christian Messenger*, that *Z.* had come forward with more zeal than knowledge. I do not know the writer, but suppose him to be a young man; his language is good, and I love him because I believe his intentions are also good. He is a believer in universal salvation, and I love him the better for that; but I do not love his errors, because they can neither be profitable to himself nor to any other person, and would willingly contribute my mite to correct, in the spirit of meekness, what I think to be these errors, which while indulged in must

darken the mind by shutting out the truth.

Z. has stated in the Christian Messenger, page 67, that the "Scripture teaches no future punishment, for 'he that is dead is freed from sin;' and unless we can sin in eternity, we cannot be miserable, for sin and misery are inseparable. But the Apostle has shewn that we cannot sin, for we shall be raised in glory, &c." and again, "when our Saviour spoke of the resurrection, in answer to the enquirer, he said, 'They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.' If then they are children of God, being children of the resurrection, or as the angels of God, how can they either sin or be miserable?"

I know that more than one Universalist clergyman have endeavoured to maintain that doctrine, which I always thought was a very great mistake, and not without danger; because it gave too much cause to the adversaries of universal salvation to say, that the doctrine led to licentiousness; and when so preached, the charge was just. There is a mistake which sometimes arises from the improper use of words. If *eternity* be, as I suppose, continued duration without beginning or end, we are just as much in eternity now as ever we can possibly be. With respect to the term *punishment*, I have no idea of any thing vindictive in the character or dealings of God; but consider all the sufferings which he does, or ever will inflict on mankind, as fatherly chastisements, designed by him for the benefit of the sufferers; and the principles of his conduct are unchangeable like himself. *He chastens for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.* Heb. xii. 10. His designs cannot be frustrated. In John v. 25, our Lord said, *The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.* This, I think, refers to those who were dead in sins, who should hear and believe the gospel, and be made partakers of spiritual life. Of this change, the apostle speaks, Eph. ii. 4, 5. *God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.* He did not say that in the hour which now is, *all the dead* should hear his

voice and live, for he well knew that many would not believe during their present lives. When in Rom. vi. 7, the apostle says, *he that is dead is freed from sin*, the words quoted by Z. it evidently refers to men in this present life becoming *dead to sin*, but *alive to righteousness*, by the *body of sin being destroyed*, that henceforth they should *not serve sin*. If Z. had read this chapter with attention, I think he would not have applied verse 7th as he has done. But the words of our Lord in John v. 28, 29. are very different from those in verse 25th, and the meaning as different. *The hour cometh when all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.* Hence I conclude, that those who have lived and died in a state of wickedness, will not at that time be raised in glory, honour or immortality; but to a state of very severe discipline, the intensity or the duration I know not, but it will be inflicted by the unchangeable God for the benefit of the sufferers, and will be terminated by the second death, (as our present sufferings will be terminated by the first death,) and when raised from that death, they will be made alive in Christ. T.

(Concluded in our next Number.)

—O—

A Dialogue between a Universalist and a Limitarian.

(Continued from page 92.)

Uni. In further replying to your objection, that the soul that sins shall die, I wish in the first place to contend that this denunciation must stand, and that it is no part of the gospel dispensation to reverse it. The scheme of divine grace, manifested in Jesus, never contemplated any method to prevent the sinner's receiving the due reward of his iniquity. The mistake which lies at the bottom of many errors and false notions, and which has given them rise and support, is the unfounded, unreasonable, and unscriptural opinion that God has denounced a penalty of eternal death on man for his sins. So strong is the power of tradition on this subject, that ages have rolled away without bringing it to a general and fair discussion.

But what foundation, my dear friend, is there in all the scriptures for this opinion which has been so universally

admitted? Or what reason can there be made to appear in support of it? Our doctors have said, that when God said to Adam, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," he meant that Adam should die temporally, spiritually, and eternally. But is there one word of scripture that appears in support of this statement? Moreover, they have contended that this denunciation fell, not only on Adam and Eve, but was equally awarded to all their posterity to the latest generation.

After this unreasonable, unscriptural statement is made, our divines then think about some method of removing this dreadful threatening. And here they invent a scheme of grace which is just as unreasonable and as unscriptural as their system of condemnation. Their system of justice is unmerciful, and their system of grace is unjust!

In order to remove this awful denunciation of endless punishment, they have supposed that the mediator freely offered himself to bear the punishment which was due to mankind for sin, that he, acting as a substitute, in the room of the sinner, might remove the curse from us, satisfy divine justice, and render God merciful.

Now the whole of this system of human invention may safely be denied. Yes, even if we were unable to refute it, even if we could not show its total want of propriety, we should, even in that case, be authorised to deny it; and that upon the principle that it has no support in the scriptures.

The words "eternal death," which have occupied such a distinguished rank in human tradition, are not found in all the scriptures. And the idea they communicate is as unreasonable as it is unscriptural. What reason is there in supposing any punishment to be just that is unmerciful? God is justly styled our Father in heaven; and the Saviour, when he made a comparison between an earthly parent, and our heavenly Father, evidently represented our Father in heaven to be more kind than the earthly parent. But what parent here on earth would denounce an unmerciful punishment on his offspring?

Lim. I am not a little surprised at what you have now stated, and I must say, as I said before, there seems to be something like reason in what you say,

and yet my mind is by no means clear. I will first endeavour to ascertain whether I rightly apprehend your meaning. You allow the denunciation, that the soul that sins shall die, in its full force. And you argue that even the gospel was not designed to prevent the accomplishment of this denunciation on any who sin. But you contend that the penalty of the law is not eternal death. Of course, you think there was no legal claim by which the sinner could be holden in this state of condemnation, and therefore no atonement was necessary to satisfy the demands of divine justice on the sinner, whereby he might be liberated or set free. All this you urge on the principle that no real parent could, consistently with his character, pronounce any punishment on a disobedient child, that is unmerciful. And you furthermore contend that the common doctrine of the church, which supposes that the penalty of the divine law is eternal death, that all mankind deserved, in justice, endless wrath and condemnation, and that the sufferings of Jesus Christ were necessary for a substitute in room of the sinner's endless condemnation, are unreasonable, unscriptural, unjust and unmerciful. These are the main points, if I understand you right, embraced in what you have just stated; and as the ideas are not familiar to me, and as I am not in possession of your method of argument on these points, I will thank you to go over these points once more by way of a brief illustration. For I am determined to be patient and obtain the real ground on which you rest a doctrine, which appears to me to be the greatest of all errors, that I may the more successfully direct the scriptures against you.

Uni. Your determination to understand me thoroughly, and to become acquainted with the ground on which I build my hope of the final salvation of all men, is highly commendable, and I assure you, that nothing relative to this argument, could give me greater satisfaction. I will therefore comply with your request, in as concise a manner as is convenient. And that I may be easily understood, I will avail myself of the most easy and interesting similitude which nature furnishes and the scriptures justify. Our Creator and Preserver has seen fit to style him-

self "our Father who is in heaven." Mankind, in the language of divine inspiration, are called his children. Now if there be any just reliance to be placed on this language, we are authorized to believe that the divine Being conducts towards mankind, as a good parent here on earth does towards his offspring, allowing the necessary difference, arising from the disparity between the Creator and a creature; in which allowance the preference for real goodness is on the part of God, and is to be considered as much greater in him than in the earthly father, as his other attributes excel those of his creature. These things premised, we will suppose that a parent of a numerous family gives forth his commands to his children, and informs them of the desirable consequences of obedience, and the chastisement with which they must be exercised if they disobey. The father has the sole control in appointing the rewards and punishments. Now what I contend for is this, as these rewards are designed to incline the children to obedience, so the threatened punishments are designed to favour the same object; and as when the rewards are bestowed on obedience, they are designed to induce to future faithfulness, so when punishments are inflicted, they are designed to promote the same end. And it is a fact, that in the parental character, there is no such thing known as any punishment, which is not designed for the benefit of the disobedient. This reasoning applied to the conduct of our heavenly Father, shows at once, that he never could, consistently with his parental character, denounce any threatening on his creatures, which, in its fullest operation, does not operate favourably on its subject. Again; a parent gives directions to his children to walk in a certain path, while attempting to go to a desired place. He informs them that while they keep in the way, they will walk with ease, make good speed, and enjoy every necessary refreshment; but if they wander from the path, they will soon be lost, find themselves encompassed with briars and thorns, will be overtaken with darkness, be unable to make any progress towards the place of their desire, and find no wholesome refreshments. The children set out, but being invited by some wild flowers which

grow beside the way, they quit their plain, pleasant path, to gratify their fancies, but soon find themselves bewildered. They run every way to find the right, but plunge further into difficulty, and every thing happens to them accordingly as the parent told them before they set out. Here again, what I contend for is, that the denunciation of all these calamities has no signification which goes to confine these children to the state they are in for ever. The parent does not say, if you get into this difficulty, I will never help you out, but leave you there to perish. As this applies to our heavenly Father, and his offspring, we may observe, that God said to Adam, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." But he did not intimate that he would not bring him to life again; he did not say, your death shall be eternal. So likewise by the prophet, God says, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." But there is no intimation that this state of death is endless. We may now proceed to improve our simile, to show that the common doctrine of condemnation is unmerciful. Would it not be an unmerciful act in the father, to pass sentence on his children, who had wandered out of the way, and gotten among thorns and briars, into darkness, and the afflictions of hunger and thirst, that they should not be assisted out of their trouble? Should we expect to hear a kind father say of his children in the foregoing condition; they got into trouble by their own disobedience, I told them of the danger and warned them against it, and it is perfectly just and right to let them perish with hunger and thirst, and that without mercy? Every heart possessed of the least sensibility, revolts at such *unmerciful justice*, and condemns at once the supposed conduct of the father. Now this is the justice which our divines have attributed to our Father in heaven. They contend that the justice of God requires that every sinner should perish eternally without receiving the smallest favour from him, either in time or hereafter. Thus it appears that this common doctrine of condemnation is unmerciful; and therefore it deserves no place in our religious belief. As it would be most repugnant to the character of a kind parent, to represent him as in the foregoing supposed case, so it is most dis-

honourable to our Father in heaven to represent him as exercising such unfeeling justice towards his weak and dependent offspring.

(To be Continued.)

Christian Messenger.

Philadelphia, Saturday, Jan. 22, 1820.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

THE impressions of infancy are too often passed along as trivial, when indeed they are not, for if traced, we shall find that they give much of the turn to our pursuits. Being in my youth much among religious people, the name of Tom Paine was often mentioned; it was connected in a hymn with "the world and devil!" Horror pervaded the inmost recesses of my heart; the monster in human form carried terror to my thoughts, not a little heightened, by an old lady informing me that he was the son of the devil. I mention these things without any apology, as I wish to show parents how bad are the innocent falsehoods they palm on children. As I grew up, the history of revolutionary struggles excited in me much interest; I beheld with reverential respect the heroes who had purchased the blessings of Independence for the sons of Columbia. The writings of Mr. Paine on political subjects caused many erroneous impressions to leave me, and I beheld this "son of the devil" as the defender of the "Rights of Man." His *Age of Reason* was next read, and let me add, studied; the witnesses for, and against the revelation were carefully examined, and the result terminated in a confirmed belief of the Sacred Volume; which I had before believed, but believed (as it is to be feared many young people do) merely because my parents and friends had put it into my hands. I now examined every inch of the ground, and judging for myself, found it, to my satisfaction, true. But the political writings of Paine had given me an exalted opinion of him, notwithstanding his errors on religious subjects; fearless of opposition, he had asserted that all men should be free, his voice was never hushed while liberty stood in need of a defender; he was among the first who showed the inhumanity of domestic slavery, and called on the possessors of freedom,

to liberate the poor and suffering negro from bondage; he pleaded for the life of Louis 16th, when those around thirsted for his blood; he was condemned with the eccentric Baron Trenck to die, on account of his exertions against tyranny: the latter was executed, while Paine escaped, for a fever prevented his removal from the dungeon. His religious writings I believe, were caused by the purest motives, the traditions of men had been added to scripture, and Paine raised his pen against them. Can I but admire that man, who faced the persecution of a world, who, fearless of the torrent that overwhelmed him, dared to give to the world what he believed truth? His works I opened with prejudice lurking in my bosom: I have been cured, radically cured, for I now behold him as the foe of tyranny, the friend of man. If his writings have done harm, they did more good; they called from their closets the giants of christianity, and caused an investigation, which has placed the Bible on a foundation which can never be shaken. Such are the ideas I entertain of Paine and his writings. I profess to be a christian; and as the founder of christianity has taught us, both by precept and example, to pity those out of the way, I am far from withholding this from a brother who could not see as I do.

REPENTANCE.

(Concluded in our next)

POETS' CORNER.

THOU great first cause! least understood!
Eternal source of ev'ry good!
Who from eternal ages stood!
Unchanging God! Jehovah! Lord!
To whom all nature bows the knee,
Adoring angels worship pay,
And seraphim attune the lay,
Obeying thy omnific word.

Display thy nature, boundless LOVE,
Make ev'ry heart thy goodness prove,
To sing thy name in realms above,
Enthron'd with Jesus Christ on high;
And may thy mercy still abound
Thro' nature's void, the world around,
Till sinners, all in glory crown'd,
Shall holy live, no more to die.

Then shall thy name have endless praise,
From ev'ry creature's deathless lays,
When thou shalt lengthen out their days,
In heav'n, to sacred worship pay;
Immortal joy shall be the song,
Sung by all nature's num'rous throng,
And glory shall the hymn prolong
To an eternal, endless day.

K.

All manner of sins shall be forgiven. Mark iii. 28, 29. Isa. lviii. 16.

Thus saith the Saviour of our race,
While mercy beam'd in Jesus' face,
The Pharisees indignant heard,
And all his words they disregard.

"All kinds of blasphemy and sin,
Wherewith soe'er they shall blaspheme,
Shall be forgiv'n the sons of men,
That they may surely life obtain.

"But the vile wretch who shall abuse
The holy spirit of my love,
Hath not forgiveness to the age,
In which a recompense is made.

"They shall receive in all their sin,
A recompense of guilt and shame;
The judgment long shall all endure,
Whose sinful hearts are so impure."

But Christ in mercy will return:
(For should the vengeance always burn,
Spirits of men would surely fade;
The souls would shrink which God hath made.)

He'll raise the soul from deep distress,
And clothe it with his righteousness;
Blasphemous sins shall be forgiv'n,
And ransom'd souls be brought to heav'n.

K.

BOOKS

On the subject of Universal Salvation, for Sale by the Editor, No. 137, Chestnut street—where subscriptions will be received for the Messenger.

A TREATISE ON ATONEMENT; in which the finite nature of sin is argued, its cause and consequences as such; the necessity and nature of atonement; and its glorious consequences in the final reconciliation of all men to holiness and happiness. \$1

A SERIES OF LECTURES on the Doctrine of Universal Benevolence. 75 cents.

PRESBYTERIANISM versus PRESBYTERIANISM, or A Candid Review, &c. 10 cents.

A Refutation of the cruel and unmerciful doctrine of endless misery; containing an explanation of the terms hell, damnation, the wrath of God, for ever and ever, everlasting, eternal, &c. 25 cts.

Strictures on a Pamphlet entitled "Religious Tract," Published by the Genesee Missionary Society, attempting to prove "the certain and endless punishment of impenitent sinners;" wherein it is shown that the several statements in said pamphlet are incorrect. 6 cents.

Remarks on a Pamphlet entitled "A Review of an Anonymous Publication, styled Strictures on a Pamphlet, entitled 'A Religious Tract,'" &c as above. 6 cents.

A Voice from the Living: addressed to the Rev. Thomas H. Skinner, who drew up for publication, the Tract recently published by the Tract Society of Philadelphia, called "Another Voice from the Grave," and occasioned by his more recent acknowledgement, that, in this matter, "he has been the subject of flagrant imposition." 6 cents.

On the Pamphlets, a deduction of 50 per cent will be made, to those who purchase by the dozen to give away.

(See also last Number.)

PRINTED BY ADAM WALDIE,

BACK OF 74, SOUTH SECOND STREET.

NO. 26.

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